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NATURAL HISTORY MISCELLANY.

BOTANY.

FERTILIZATION OF SALVIA BY HUMBLE BEES. — Mr. Meehan's statements "On Objections to Darwin's Theory of Fertilization through Insect Agency," at the late meeting of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, an abstract of which is given in the October Number of the AMERICAN NATURALIST, are at such variance with my own observations on the same subject, that I cannot allow them to pass unchallenged. Mr. Meehan affirms that the humble bee does not enter the corolla of the Salvia to obtain the honey, but "bores a hole on the outside" for that purpose. He says, after describing the structure of the flower — "The principle is perfect. *But no insect is seen to enter.*" This statement is certainly not in accordance with facts. I have again and again observed the conduct of the humble bee on the Salvia; and I affirm that a large majority of the bees *do* enter the corolla, and that the anthers rest on the back of the insect exactly in the way that Mr. Meehan says they ought to rest. It is true that some of the bees do cut the tube of the corolla to get the honey. This, however, is only done by those bees which are *too large* to get into the flower. — E. H. T., *Hindsbury, Delaware Co., Penn., Oct. 15, 1870.*

MOTION IN THE LEAVES OF RHUS TOXICODENDRON. — Botanical writers tell us that sections of a leaf of *Schinus molle*, thrown in water, have a peculiar jerking motion. Under the name of "Australian Myrtle," I have received seeds from California, which prove to be this plant. The leaves have the motions described. I thought perhaps our own representatives of this order (*Anacardiaceæ*) might present the same phenomenon. I find that this is the case with *Rhus toxicodendron*. Small sections of a leaf leap about in water, but not with the same force as do those of the *Schinus*. *Rhus aromatica* though so nearly allied, presents, *to me*, no motion. I have tried *Rhus glabra*, *R. copallina* and *R. typhina*, but find no motion in any but in the one before named — the common "poisoning." A friend to whom I have suggested it, however, tells me that his gardener finds that at "some hour in the day" these also will leap about. The *Schinus* and *Rhus toxicodendron* with me exhibit their saltatorial feats at any and all times. — THOMAS MEEHAN.

BUR GRASS. — I enclose a plant that is very annoying to farmers on the eastern shore of Maryland. I am not botanist enough to determine its place. The natives call it "Sand Burr." Will you be kind enough to say something in the NATURALIST about it? — JOHN W. NOTT.

[Cenchrus, Hedge-hog or Bur-grass, is peculiar for a general resemblance to our Couch or Quitch-grass, and in its habits is equally regarded

with aversion by the farmers. But this latter is a Northern grass, not found at the South, while the Bur-grass is to be found only beyond the limits of New England; according to Dr. Lapham, from Wisconsin to Minnesota; and in the Middle and Southern States, according to other observers. The specimen sent to us by Mr. Nott is *C. echinatus* Muhlenburg (*Descriptio Ueberior Graminum*, p. 51) and figured by Plunkenet (*Phytographia* tab. 92-3). It is described by Dr. Chapman in his "Flora of the Southern United States," p. 578; and another species, the *C. tribuloides*, which grows on the seashores of Delaware, Carolina, etc., known as the Cockspur or Bur-grass, is also familiar to farmers, and much dreaded. As much as we detest the Couch-grass of our northern farms, we are to rejoice in the absence of these spiny and thorny spiked and burred-grasses in our northern soils. In some sections where the land is light, the Couch-grass makes a nutritious fodder and hay, being freely eaten by horses and cows; but we suspect that these sagacious animals would not care to digest the flowers and seeds of the "Sand Burr," although the leaves and stems of *C. echinatus* appear tender and abundant, and we can easily understand that it is very annoying where it naturally grows. — J. L. RUSSELL.]

WOLFFIA IN BLOSSOM. — I have just found (August 28th, 1870) the *Wolffia Columbiana* Karsten, flowering abundantly in a pool at Sandwich, Ontario, on the Detroit River. I enclose specimens. I discovered this station for it more than a year ago; but hitherto have failed to find the flowers till now. Untold millions of these tiny plants covered the surface of the water hiding it completely, and lying *en masse*, at least three-quarters of an inch thick. We find it, also (though not fertile), some miles higher up the river, at Connor's Creek, Michigan, but nowhere else along the shores. Though Gray says "flowers and fruit not seen," it has, I think, been found once in flower in the Catskills. The delicate white flowers disappear soon after taking it from the water; but on placing some, next day, in my aquarium, the little plants at once "righted themselves," and the flowers almost instantly reappeared, expanding fresh as ever from the centre of the frond. Last year, in the same pool, it was quite abundant, growing with *Lemna minor* L., which was, however, largely in the majority. Now, I find the *Wolffia* has almost taken possession of the pool, driving out the *Lemna*, which is "few and far between," and of a sickly, degraded type. — HENRY GILLMAN, *Detroit, Michigan*.

ZOOLOGY.

ABDOMINAL SENSE-ORGANS IN A FLY. — While engaged in naming a collection of microscopic preparations of insects mounted on slides by Mr. T. W. Starr of Philadelphia, for the collection of Dr. T. D'Oremieulx of New York, my attention was drawn to a sense-organ situated on the female anal appendages of a species of *Chrysopila*, allied to *C. ornata*